

Please help improve the lives of rural Americans by protecting and expanding the Universal Service Fund (USF) for wireless providers. Wireless telecommunications is no longer a luxury in our society; it is a fundamental necessity for public health, safety and economic development. Both myself and my family live in a rural area of Washington State; there are many areas in Eastern and Central Washington that have minimal to no coverage whatsoever. Although sparsely populated, this still raises public safety and personal safety issues for those working or residing in areas lacking telecommunication coverage. We need expanded coverage to make all of rural America accessible to wireless communications.

Capping the fund will shut the door on rural America. Less USF support for rural wireless networks will leave us with poor coverage, dropped calls and dangerous dead zones. We, in Eastern and Central Washington have too many “dead-zones” and dropped calls as is because of marginal signal or no signal coverage. The urban/rural technology gap will only widen if this cap is implemented.

Rural America deserves the same cell phone service as our big cities. We are part of America, also, and cannot afford to be left out of the wireless loop, foremost for reasons of personal safety. I urge you to expand – not cap – the USF. Please don't leave us behind.

Thank you.